

Message Text

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46

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 OMB-01 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 EB-07 /087 W

----- 087678

R 281057Z MAY 75

FM AMCONSUL BELFAST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 938

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USNAVCOMMSTA LONDONDERRY

UNCLAS BELFAST 182

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, U.K. (N.I.)

SUBJECT: FIRST CONVENTION DEBATE AMICABLE

REF: BELFAST 175

1. NORTHERN IRELAND CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION HELD ITS FIRST FULL DEBATE IN FOUR-HOUR SESSION MAY 27. MINORITY SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY (SDLP) HAD DECIDED IN CAUCUS SEEK RULING BY CHAIRMAN ON LEGALITY DISPUTED STANDING ORDERS (REFTEL) AND DEPUTY LEADER JOHN HUME INTRODUCED POINT OF ORDER TO THIS EFFECT IMMEDIATELY AFTER PRAYER. CHAIRMAN AGREED TO RULE OR "OBSERVE" AT BEGINNING OF SESSION MAY 28 ON WHETHER CERTAIN PROPOSED RULES WERE WITHIN LETTER AND SPIRIT OF ACT ESTABLISHING CONVENTION. IT CLEAR TWO RULES, ONE ESTABLISHING A BUSINESS COMMITTEE TO SCREEN PROPOSED AGENDA AND OTHER PROVIDING SINGLE FINAL REPORT TO WESTMINSTER PARLIAMENT CAUSING SDLP MOST CONCERN. THEIR POINT OF ORDER WAS THAT THESE AND OTHER RULES DIMINISHED AUTHORITY OF APPOINTED CHAIRMAN CONTRARY TO INTENT ACT.

2. REVEREND IAN PAISLEY OF UNITED ULSTER UNIONIST COALITION
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(UUUC) MAJORITY, PERHAPS AS REFLECTION HIS CHAIRMANSHIP RULES

COMMITTEE, DOMINATED DEBATE ON MAJORITY SIDE. HE WAS MODERATE, GOOD-HUMORED, UNDERSTANDING AND MASTERFUL OF TIMING AND "PARLIAMENTARY" PROCEDURE. AS OFFICIAL UNIONIST JOHN TAYLOR REMARKED TO REPORTING OFFICER, PAISLEY WAS A DIFFERENT MAN FROM HIS POPULAR IMAGE AS STREET DEMAGOGUE.

3. PROCEEDINGS WERE MARKED BY COURTESY AND BY EXPRESSIONS SOLICITUDE OF EACH SIDE FOR POINTS VIEW AND CONCERNS OF OTHER. UUUC AGREED TO SUBMIT DISPUTED ORDERS TO RULING BY CHAIRMAN AND SDLP AGREED DEBATE COULD PROCEED ON PROPOSED ORDERS PENDING RULING BY CHAIRMAN. IN THIS WAY FIRST DAY VOTED AVOIDED. MILITANTLY LOYALIST DAILY NEWSLETTER CARRIED HEADLINE MAY 28 "SIGNS OF HOPE IN DEBATE."

SPICER

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NNN

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